

WELCOME

The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department welcomes all volunteers. The Adopt-a-Trail program (AAT) is one of many “service learning” opportunities available through the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department.

To assist new volunteer adopters in learning about the Parks and Recreation Department (BPR) and their specific volunteer responsibilities, the Department has designed this **Adopt-a-Trail Volunteer Manual**. It is our hope to provide each volunteer with a solid training foundation which includes information concerning Department policy, procedures, goals, mission, program responsibilities, and general guidelines as they relate to your experience.

The Department asks that all volunteers become familiar with the information presented. As a volunteer of BPR, you are expected to follow the guidelines provided here. If there is something that is not addressed in the following pages, please contact BPR during regular business hours for guidance, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday, at (812) 349-3700.

All volunteers are required to complete an orientation form confirming that they have been to a training session and/or are familiar with the information presented in the **Adopt-a-Trail Volunteer Manual**. Thank you for offering your time and labor to help improve trails in Bloomington. Your commitment is greatly appreciated!

The following are included in your Adopt-a-Trail packet:

- **Adopt-a-Trail Volunteer Manual**
- The following forms: **Adopt-a-Trail Volunteer’s Release, Hold-harmless and Indemnification Agreement, Adopt-a-Trail Parental Permission Slip and Release Form, Adopt-a-Trail Report Form**, (See VIII. Appendix, D. Forms).
- A brief trail maintenance guide, “**Trail Shorts: A cursory Look at Trail Maintenance**”, compliments of California State Parks and Recreation
- A pamphlet on invasive plants, ***Invasive Plants of Indiana***, compliments of Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society, including the Indiana Academy of Science, Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Nature Preserves The Nature Conservancy, and the USDA Forest Service.
- A clipboard

INTRODUCTION

Mission

Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department will provide essential services, facilities, and programs necessary for the positive development and well being of the community through the provision of parks, greenways, trails, and recreational facilities while working in cooperation with other service providers in the community in order to maximize all available resources.

Objectives

The Department holds the following objectives for the Adopt-a-Trail Program.

1. Ensure the continued enjoyment of the trails in Bloomington parks.
2. Unite those interested in responsible land management practices through maintenance of trails and public education.
3. Promote land stewardship, physical fitness, and community.

Your Responsibility

In addition to performing your volunteer adopter responsibilities, it is extremely important to keep in mind that *you* are a representative of the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department at all times. What you say and do creates an image of the Department. Those participating in an activity or visiting a park will make important judgments and form opinions concerning this department based on you and your ability and desire to provide quality customer service. Please be cheerful, courteous and polite.

YOU ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET!

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I. RECRUITMENT/TRAINING

Recruitment and Application

Adopt-A-Trail opportunities with Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department are available throughout the year. If you or any member of your group are interested in other volunteer opportunities, please contact the BPR Special Services Coordinator by call (812) 349-3739.

Applications for volunteer opportunities are available at the Parks and Recreation Department Office between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Applications are judged on the basis of experience in recreation leadership roles, references, and other experiences. The Police Department, due to the nature of public work, may check backgrounds. The Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Bloomington are committed to the policy that all persons have equal access to all programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or political affiliations.

Training

AAT volunteers are required to attend an orientation and an on-site training. Volunteer hours accumulated in trainings will be included in service hours and can be used towards Citizen Scientist Certification.

II. DUTIES

Guidelines

1. Participants must be at least 12 years of age. At least one adult must be available for every four children under the age of 12.
2. The program requires a one-year commitment.
3. The volunteer adopters perform trail inspections monthly.
4. Trail maintenance is performed once a year with BPR staff

Trail Inspections

Volunteer adopters agree to inspect their designated trail section once a month. The trail inspections involve the following activities:

1. Walking and observing the adopted section of trail.
2. Removing trash and sticks from the trail.
3. Submitting reports to BPR (see below).

Monthly Reports

Report forms, the **Adopt-a-Trail Report Form**, are available in VIII. Appendix, D. Forms and at the BPR office, 401 N. Morton Street, Suite 250. As a volunteer adopter, you are required to report on your trail section once a month. Please be sure to include the service hours your group has completed for the month. The Department tracks this information. Please include your contact information, including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, in case BPR staff has questions.

Trail Maintenance

Volunteer adopters work with BPR staff to perform more strenuous maintenance once a year. The volunteer adopters may be asked to perform the following activities during trail maintenance:

1. Remove logs and brush that encroach into the trail.
2. Prune brush and branches.
3. Install, repair, and clean water bars or other drainage structures.
4. Maintain trail surface.
5. Install, maintain, and replace trail markers.
6. Remove and trim invasive plants.
7. Other related maintenance activities.

The Department recommends volunteer adopters carry water bottles and a first aid kit.

III. CONDUCT

On the Job Conduct

Volunteers shall not report to work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. Parks and Recreation Department volunteers represent the City of Bloomington and the Parks and Recreation Department. Proper attitudes and actions that reflect positive public reaction are expected. Any improper actions will be noted and corrected. Penalties for violation of on the job conduct codes range from verbal warning to termination, depending on the severity and number of violations.

Telephone Procedures/Park Addresses

During trail maintenance days, trail supervisors may carry a BPR cellular phone with them for emergency use. Personal cell phones may be useful if an emergency should arise while on the trail. The telephone at the Griffy Lake Boathouse is available in case of emergencies during rental hours, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in April and October and from 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. daily from May through September. The Griffy Lake boathouse telephone number is (812) 349-3732.

If there is something that is not addressed in the following pages, please contact BPR during regular business hours for guidance, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday, at (812) 349-3700.

After hours, if there is an emergency, please call (812) 339-1444 or (812) 349-3903. Both of these numbers can help you 24-hours/day, 365 days/year.

Park addresses:

Griffy Lake Nature Preserve, 3300 N. Headley Rd.
Leonard Springs Nature Park, 4685 S. Leonard Springs Rd.
Wapehani Mt. Bike Park, 2800 W. Wapehani Rd.

Transportation of Volunteers

Volunteers may occasionally be transported in City of Bloomington vehicles. Prior to riding in a City of Bloomington vehicle, volunteers, or the guardian of the volunteers (if minors), must complete the appropriate release form. This form will hold harmless and indemnify the City of Bloomington, its employees, officers, and agents for any claims that may arise out of any accident.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department to maintain a workplace free of harassment on the basis of race, sex, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation for any employee and volunteer. Harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favors, and unwelcome and/ or offensive sexual comments. A volunteer who believes they have been subject to harassment as defined in this manual shall report said event to Department administrators or Employee Services.

Media Relations

Refer all persons working for the press and requesting information to the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department, (812) 349-3700.

IV. SAFETY

Clothing

When working on trails, clothing should be comfortable and should cover arms and legs. As you work, you may become warm, therefore, wearing layers of clothing is recommended. Shoes must have enclosed toes and heels, high-top, hard-soled boots are best. Gloves are a necessity when picking-up trash and performing maintenance tasks.

Please always be alert and careful when working on trails. The following list of potential hazards, while not complete, may be encountered while working on trails.

Suggested Backpack Items

1. Water bottle
2. Snacks

3. Suntan lotion
4. First-aid kit
5. Cell phone

Trail Traffic

Watch for trail users. Hikers may not expect maintenance crews to be on the trail, be alert and aware of your surroundings, especially when using tools.

Insect Bites and Stings

Bees, hornets, flies, mosquitoes, and other insects are common. If you are allergic to bees or other bugs, be sure to carry a sting and/or other kit that will counteract the consequences.

Ticks

Ticks can carry several diseases including Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Be sure to check hair and clothes for ticks after your trail outings.

Snakes

Avoid contact with snakes, if a snake is encountered move away from it. Few snakes in Indiana are venomous. Indiana's venomous snakes usually appear fatter than non-poisonous snakes and have spade-shaped heads that are distinctively larger than their necks. Do not attempt to handle any snake and stay at least the snake's length away. Be especially cautious near rocks, logs, stumps, and holes. If you would like to learn more about Indiana snakes, refer to <http://herps.ipfw.edu/center/accounts/snakes/hcsnakes.htm>.

Poison Ivy

Poison ivy has three leaves per stem. Remember the saying, "Leaflets three, let them be."

If you do come into contact with poison ivy, an allergic reaction may be prevented if you take the following actions within six hours:

1. Wash skin with soap and water.
2. Launder shoes and clothing that have come into contact with the plant.

Thorns

Wearing gloves and proper clothing will help prevent scratches and cuts, avoid thorns when possible.

Heat Injury

If not treated, heat exhaustion can lead to dehydration, fainting, and a heat stroke.

Avoid heat exhaustion by pacing yourself, drinking plenty of fluids, and wearing proper clothing. Also, do not work in the extreme heat. If you become overheated, sit or lie down in the shade and drink cool fluids.

CARRY A WATER BOTTLE, take breaks in the shade, and stop working if you get too hot.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses more heat than the body can produce. Symptoms include drowsiness, pale skin, slurred speech, and confusion. A person experiencing hypothermia may not know they need help. Hypothermia can be life-threatening.

Avoid hypothermia by staying dry, and wearing proper clothing. Wear layers so you can remove clothes when you become too warm and replace them when you get cold. Avoid wearing cotton clothing when working in cold temperatures. Do not work when temperatures are extreme.

V. RISK MANAGEMENT/SAFETY PROCEDURES

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are required to exercise due care in the course of their responsibilities in order to prevent injury to themselves, other volunteers or employees, and to the participants in the programs.

Volunteers should:

1. Report all unsafe conditions to supervisory staff immediately while making sure the facilities/parks are safe.
2. Learn and observe the safety rules, procedures, and policies.
3. Read and sign a volunteer waiver statement prior to volunteering for any program.
4. Know their trail section's nearest emergency access point.
5. Stay with their group
6. Take breaks, drink plenty of fluids, and not overexert themselves.
7. Not handle suspicious/hazardous materials.
8. Watch for and avoid poisonous plants, snakes, thorns, and other outdoor hazards.
9. Work during daylight hours and fair weather.
10. Have fun!

Volunteer Waivers

A waiver is essentially a contract between two parties, in which one agrees to forego pursuit of any legal claim in exchange for some benefit conferred by the other party. Indiana law allows the use of waivers, and will uphold them when the parties' intent is clearly expressed on the signed document. Thus, the Department is within its rights to use waivers; and may reasonably rely upon their enforceability. For adults, the form is entitled, **Adopt-a-Trail Volunteer's Release, Hold-Harmless and Indemnification Agreement** (See VIII. Appendix, D. Forms). Children under the age of 18 years cannot sign waivers for themselves; parents or legal guardians must sign the required waivers

prior to participation, the **Adopt-a-Trail Parental Permission Slip and Release Form** (See VIII. Appendix, D. Forms).

Insurance

The City of Bloomington does not provide Workmen's Compensation to volunteers injuring themselves while participating in one of the Department-sponsored programs or assisting at a work site. The City does not pay hospitalization bills or medical claims of any nature for volunteers. All volunteers are strongly urged to obtain their own insurance coverage before participating in any program or activity sponsored by the Department.

Use of Personal Vehicles for Department Business

Volunteers who use their personal vehicle to perform tasks of a volunteer nature who are involved in a vehicle accident while performing the volunteer service will not receive City of Bloomington Liability insurance coverage. The responsibility for repair of the volunteer's personal vehicle is borne by the volunteer's insurance company.

VI. EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT REPORTING

In Case of Accident/Emergency Procedures

Notify BPR staff immediately in case of accident and/or emergency.

All accidents and injuries sustained in Parks and Recreation activities shall be reported on the required accident report form and turned in to the office within 24 hours of the accident.

During regular business hours, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday, call (812) 349-3700.

After hours, call (812) 339-1444 or (812) 349-3903 – Both of these numbers can help you 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Then, notify the BPR staff during regular business hours, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday, at (812) 349-3700.

Park addresses:

Griffy Lake Nature Preserve, 3300 N. Headley Rd.
Leonard Springs Nature Park, 4685 S. Leonard Springs Rd.
Wapehani Mt. Bike Park, 2800 W. Wapehani Rd.

General Information Regarding Accident/Injuries

1. Avoid making any statements of opinion regarding the severity of the injury or accident.
2. Use judgment in keeping spectators away. Maintain control and supervision of other participants.

3. The Department does not have insurance that covers participants' injuries due to their own actions. Do not tell the injured party BPR will pay for treatment.
4. Make no statements about the accident to anyone but the police or other authorities.
5. First Aid Certified Volunteers
Volunteers who are certified in First Aid with the American Red Cross may perform First Aid if the need should arise.

VII. ADOPTION RENEWAL/TERMINATION

Adoption Renewal

At the end of the yearlong commitment, groups, which have properly performed all Adopt-a-Trail requirements, will have the option of renewing the AAT agreement.

Suspension/Dismissal

Violation of policies as described in this manual and/or unsatisfactory job performance can result in termination of this volunteer opportunity. The following criteria and procedures for disciplinary action have been established to benefit the volunteers as well as the Department.

If a volunteer violates a policy and/or procedures as indicated in this manual, disciplinary action may be taken. This disciplinary action will occur in the following order depending on severity of the violation.

1. The volunteer receives a verbal warning of the infraction.
2. If repeated violations occur, a written warning may be sent to the volunteer and placed in their file.
3. The final resolution available if violations continue is a written suspension or dismissal.
 - Note any violation of severe nature may result in immediate suspension or dismissal.

Disciplinary action will only be taken after a thorough investigation into an incident and careful evaluation of the facts. During the investigation, the volunteer will be given an opportunity to express his or her account of the events.

Once a ruling is made, the volunteer will be given three business days to respond to the proposed disciplinary action. If the volunteer feels the proposed action would be unfair, he or she will have the option of appealing the decision through the BPR organizational chart with a final appeal to the Division Director.

VIII. APPENDIX

A. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Invasive Plants

An invasive plant is a plant that grows aggressively, outcompeting other plants as it proliferates. Some invasive plants cause problems in our local parks by:

1. Displacing plants that wildlife depend on for food and shelter.
2. Eliminating habitat essential for rare wildflowers and animals (Two-thirds of all endangered species are threatened by invasive plants).
3. Diverting money from other park programs and facilities.

Volunteer Adopters Invasive Plant Responsibilities

Volunteer adopters should familiarize themselves with local invasive plants. Adopters should report any of these plants that they observe along the trail. These plants include:

Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)
Bush Honeysuckle (
Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
Common Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
Winter Creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

For ways to identify them, see the enclosed pamphlet, "Invasive Plants in Indiana".

B. SOIL AND WATER

Soil Erosion

Soil erosion may occur when persons and/or animals walk off trail and disturb the vegetative cover, exposing the ground and making it susceptible to runoff after it rains. Soil from Bloomington may eventually end up in the Gulf of Mexico via various inter-connect waterways. Sediment is the biggest source of water pollution.

Shortcut/Illegal Trails

Off-trail foot traffic causes soil erosion and other problems. Shortcut trails begin with a single person walking off a designated trail. Shortcuts can quickly become well-worn paths in areas that had previously been vegetated. If you observe a shortcut/illegal trail forming, please report the trail and its location.

Hazardous or Fallen Trees

Please notify the Department of any hazardous trees along your trail section. The locations of trees that have fallen across the trail, and any other trail obstacles should also be included.

Wet or Muddy Sections of Trail

Rain, snow, and ice can cause flooding on the trails, especially in low-lying areas. When trails are wet, hikers tend to walk around wet or muddy areas, often damaging trailside

vegetation. Please report water-related problems you observe on the trail. BPR staff will attempt to correct wet or muddy sections of trail.

C. TOOLS

These tools may be needed during authorized workdays...

Tool Safety

While working with tools:

Be aware of your surroundings. Make sure you have swinging clearance. People may walk behind you and cut your clearance off. Be sure you are not too close to individuals working near you. The length of the tool and your arm combined may place the cutting tool close to another person.

Be aware of where you are standing. Hazardous footing can cause accidents.

Be sure that you have a proper grip. Wet and/or muddy conditions can cause problems. Wearing gloves will provide protection for your hands.

Be sure to use the proper tool. If you are not sure which tool to use, ask a BPR employee. The proper tool will save you work and allow you to accomplish the task efficiently and safely.

Carry tools properly. Be sure to carry tools pointed down, in your hands, and at your side. Use guards/shields whenever possible.

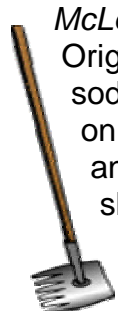
Tools Employed/Proper Utilization of Tools

Below are tools you may employ on the trails...

Pulaski



Developed as a fire-fighting tool, the Pulaski combines an adz-shaped grub hoe with an axe bit. The tool is employed in trail maintenance activities to loosen dirt, uproot bushes, and cut roots. In addition, the Pulaski can be utilized in woodworking projects to shape notches and joints of bridges, turnpikes, and other projects.

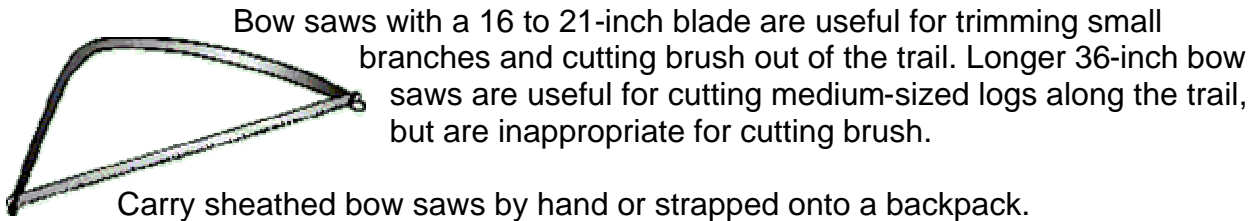


McLeod

Originally developed as a fire-fighting tool to rake fire lanes and cut branches and sod, the McLeod combines teeth to rake with on one side with a sharp cutting edge on the other. The tool is employed in trail maintenance activities to remove slough and berm from the trail and smooth tread. In addition, the McLeod is useful when shaping a trail's back slope.

Carry this tool with the tines facing away from your body.

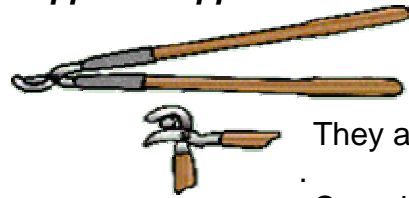
Bow Saw



Bow saws with a 16 to 21-inch blade are useful for trimming small branches and cutting brush out of the trail. Longer 36-inch bow saws are useful for cutting medium-sized logs along the trail, but are inappropriate for cutting brush.

Carry sheathed bow saws by hand or strapped onto a backpack.

Loppers /Clippers



Loppers have long handles with cutting heads that are either anvil type or sliding-blade-and-hook type. They can cut through limbs 1 to 1 ¾ inches in diameter. They are used to clear heavy vegetation from the trails.

Carry loppers with the jaws pointed down and away from you.

Shovels



Round-point shovels are used in trail maintenance activities to remove weeds, loosen dirt, smooth tread, and dig holes and trenches. Do not use shovels as a lever to pry rocks. Both the long-handle and the D-handle shovels are good for trail work. The long-handle (usually 48-inches) is best for digging holes. The D-handle is best for digging in restrained spaces and moving soil.

Never leave a shovel lying horizontally on the ground.

If you would like to learn about more trail maintenance tools, you may visit the following website: www.americanhiking.org/emporium/trailtools.html

D. FORMS

Adopt-a-Trail Volunteer's Release

Hold-harmless and Indemnification Agreement

Adopt-a-Trail Parental Permission Slip and Release Form

Adopt-a-Trail Report Form